

HMONG YOUTH GANG VIOLENCE IN SACRAMENTO REGION

A Project

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MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

by

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Date

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Division of Social Work

Abstract
of
HMONG YOUTH GANG VIOLENCE IN THE SACRAMENTO REGION
by
Pao T. Xiong

The Sacramento Region is home to one of the largest Hmong population in California. For most Hmong people, their lives have changed for the better but for some, their dreams of a better and brighter future have been shattered. Many children find themselves in the wrong side of the law by getting involved with street gangs and parents are helpless as what to do. Hmong youth street gangs significantly impacted the Hmong communities throughout the greater Sacramento region. Sacramento Hmong community feared that their children are involved in another war; street gangs. Authorities estimated that there were about 30 Hmong gang groups in the greater Sacramento area. Group member ranges from 10 to 100 members and their ages can be as young as 11 years old. Hmong gangs are known to be among one of the most violent group of people that terrorize their people throughout the Sacramento region.

Approved by:

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Dr. Serge Lee, Ph.D., MSW

Date

DEDICATION

First, I would like to dedicate this project to both of my brothers, Vu and Moua Xiong, who are truly and very special to me. Their lives have been cut short, thus they could not be here to share the joys of my accomplishment. However, I know they are joining me today in spirit. We were the three oldest sons of Katoua Xiong. We lived as brothers for a short time and in that short period of times, we always helped each other in good or bad. We never had any arguments or disagreements with each other.

My brother Vu is the one whom I looked up to and followed his footsteps. He was the first person in our village to attend school in Laos. He began his education at a very young age in Houa Phan province in Laos. He stays with extended family out of town for long period of times during the wartime. Although he knew there may be a chance that he would not be able to see us, he still commit to his education. After Houa Phan province was lost to the communist Laos, we evacuated to Xieng Khoung province. He continued his studies by attending school in Vietaine from 1970 to 1974. After receiving his high school diploma, he attended College Somthong in Xieng Khoung province to be closer to home. When we arrived in the United States, he sacrificed his education, working to support the family in order for me to go to school and obtain my Bachelor's Degree before he completed his. On October 22, 2005, two month after I started my graduate program at CSUS, he lost his life in a tragic automobile accident. It would be an honored to have him at my graduation knowing he sacrificed so much for

me. I wish he was here to see my graduation. I would like to let him know that I will always love and miss him.

My younger brother Moua, was a unique individual who had high hopes in life. He always wanted to do things that I could never think of, especially when we fled from communist prosecution. We were ambushed by the communist soldiers. He was able to find his way with other people to the refugee camp in Thailand before the rest of the family. His commitments to the Army National Guard and pursuit of higher education led him to achieve one of his goals in life. After graduating from Washington State University, he became the first and only Hmong Special Agent in the United States, Drug Enforcement Administration. He loved his job and dedicated his life to his work, trying to make a difference in other people's life around the world. In 2004, he was selected and transferred to Thailand. Sadly, while he was there he became ill and was diagnosed with a rare bone marrow disease. He returned back to the United States for treatments. Unfortunately, he lost the battle to Leukemia on February 18, 2007 during the second year of my graduate program. With his untimely death in the middle my program, I decided to postpone my education, but would never give up. As an inspiration, I want to dedicate this project to both of my brothers. Both of them are the exemplary brothers that everyone wishes to have. I will always love and miss them.

Secondly, I would like to dedicate this project to my wife and all our four children. You all are special to me. Without all of you, I would never have pursued this education. My happiness and gratitude goes out to all of you.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this project to my family, my parents, my brothers and my sisters. All of you make me proud to be your son and brother. I truly appreciate every single one of you for all your love for me.

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My acknowledgement to my wife, Soua Lee and our four children, Ashley, Tiffany, Justin and Ethan for whom I am thankful each and every day; whose love and support have given me the strength and vision to pursue graduate school at California State University of Sacramento. Throughout my years of studies, they've sacrificed so much, especially without their father being at home and helping them. Sometimes they have to walk home from school in the cold and in the rain while I'm attending classes. I am very grateful for their patience, encouragements, understanding, and nurturing personality throughout my academic endeavor. Without the family's support and loves, I could only imagine the impossible, not the endless possibilities. It would have been an impossible journey toward my academic accomplishment without my family behind me every step of the way. Thank you for believing in me and being there for me throughout my life. You are my source of energy, motivation, and the inspiration in my life.

Finally, to our children, Ashley, Tiffany, Justin and Ethan, for their patience and understanding while I am going and growing up. The four of you added positive dimensions in my life that I am very proud of. I never tell all of you, but you are my life.

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The Hmong people's way of life have changed dramatically within the past 35 years since arriving in the United States. Family members no longer share the same common goals like they used to in their former homeland. In some families, both parents are working and sometimes, even in different shift just to support their family. Some families no longer interact with each other or even dine together as they used to while living in Laos. For some families, each family member has his or her own car and goes to school or work on their own and barely see each other until the weekends. Similar to the American nuclear family, when children turned eighteen, they may move out of the home and no longer have direct involvement with their parents. The Hmong people's ways of living as harmonious and peaceful community are disappearing. However, the changes are not necessary bad. Many individuals and families have changed their social, educational and cultural aspects in positive ways. However, one negative aspect of the life in the United States continues to trouble the Hmong people and that, have to do with their children's inappropriate conducts (McCarvey, 2002). Some of these parents feel that they no longer have full control over their children and the children in turn, feel that they have full freedom to do whatever they want with little to no regard for what their parents want. When parents feel that they have lost their parental control over their children and leave children to do whatever they want, this will eventually lead to family conflict and children getting involve in deviant behaviors. For some children, that

complete disobedience to their parents may lead them to find themselves in the wrong side of the law by engaging in street gangs and criminal activities. This Master's Project is to focus on various aspects of life affecting Hmong youth in the United States that could potentially lead to them becoming involve in gang activites in the Sacramento County area.

As stated earlier, some Hmong youth chose to reject the values of their parents' traditional culture by embracing the mainstream American culture (McGarvey, 2002). These youth may think that they are the new wave. However, they are too young; therefore, lacking education and cultural skills to survive the complex American society. Those children that go against their own culture and the mainstream American cultures are trapped between the two cultures. Howard (1996) stated that these youth refuse to be part of their parents' culture, as a result, conflicts between the youth and their parents steadily increased. Howard added that the role reversal between older generation and youth has led to the breaking down of the traditional Hmong family system. A study conducted by Kaiser (2004) in the Twin cities of Minnesota found that many Hmong parents in the United States are dismayed by their children's inappropriate behavior. They believe that American notions of freedom and egalitarianism influence children in very destructive ways (Kaiser). These issues cause many Hmong parents to not want to live in this country.

Problem Statements

In the late 80s to early 90s, Hmong youth street gangs significantly impacted the Hmong communities throughout the greater Sacramento region and other states that have

large proportions of the Hmong people. According to an article in the Sacramento Bee (Jewett, 2005), the authorities estimated that there were about 30 Hmong gang groups in the greater Sacramento area at the time. The group member ranges from 10 to 100 members each and as young as 11 years of age. Some groups have become increasingly violent (Jewett, 2005). The report stated that these gang groups are known to be among the most violent gangs that terrorize their people all over the region.

In a separate report in the Sacramento Bee, Maganini (2005) stated that guns were the weapon of choice for Hmong gang, which was and perhaps still is a major, concern for law enforcements as well as Hmong parents in the Sacramento region. Even today, Hmong gangs are known to be armed and dangerous. In Maganini's article, it stated that from November of 2004 to February of 2005, there were eleventh (11) shootings and at least eight Hmong were killed. Due to violent crimes committed by Hmong gangs against their own people, gang activities have had deep impact on the wellbeing of the Hmong in the greater Sacramento region. For example, parents are afraid and would not allow their children go attend community social events because they are fearful that their children might become a victim of gang violence by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Some are fearful that allowing children to attend social events would lead to participation in gang activities. Parents are frustrated with the youth gang epidemic and fearful for their children's lives in this new country because the word gang is a new phenomona to them.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this exploratory study is to find out how much Hmong youth know about community resources in the greater Sacramento region. It will look at Hmong community-based agencies and the type of services they provide such as building self-esteem and social skills to stay away from gangs. It will also explore the extent to which community organizers such as Hmong parents, community organizations, leaders, scholars, educators, law enforcement officers, school officials and mainstream civic leaders had done to reach out to the Hmong youth to curb negative behaviors.

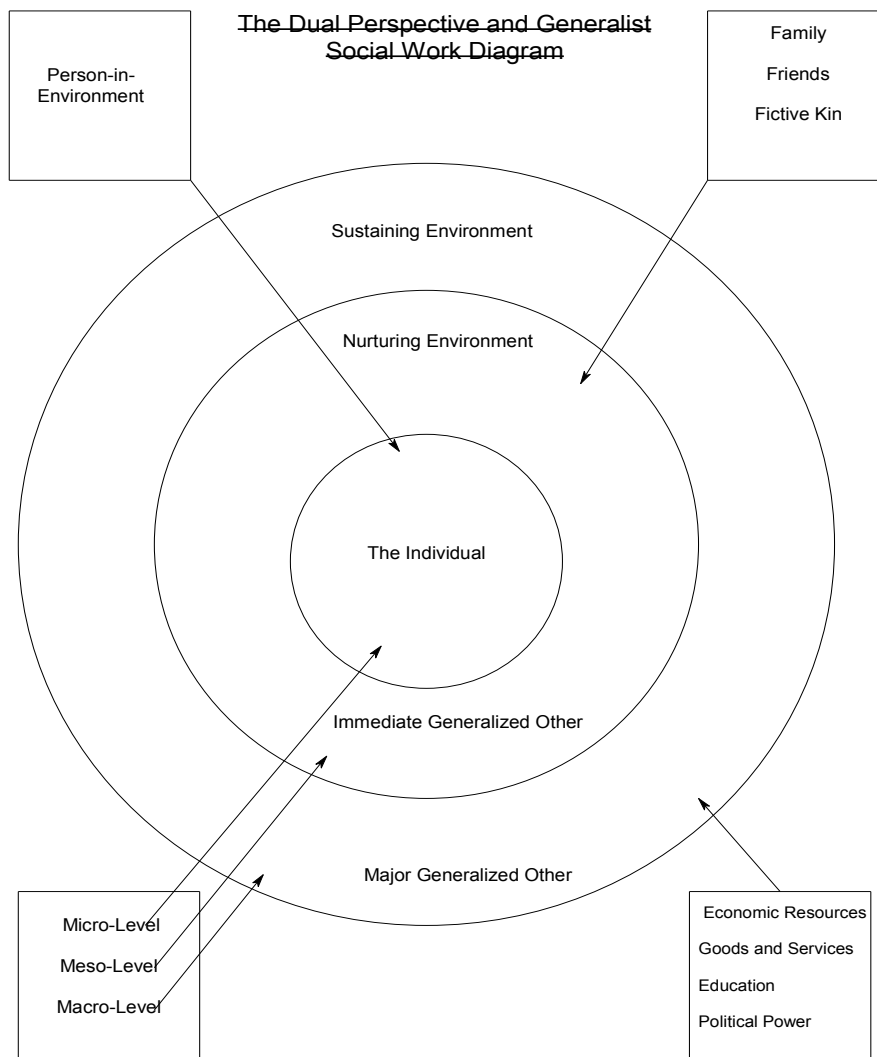
Theoretical Framework

The intention of this Master's Project is to utilize the Dual Perspective Model (as cited by Anderson & Carter, 2003), to describe Hmong family and its surrounding support systems. According to Anderson and Carter, the dual perspective focuses on the conscious and systematic process of perceiving, understanding and comparing simultaneously the values, attitudes, and behaviors of the larger societal system with those of the client's immediate family and community system. Based on this distinctive definition, the system provides a basis for assessment and understanding of the profound impact of historical antecedents upon the status and role of Asians in American society. It also represents the relationship between theory and problem solving that social welfare institutions must turn to for guidance as the American society becomes more complex.

The diagram below purported to illustrate the environmental and social systems that commonly affect Hmong children and their families. As presented by Anderson and Carter (2003), the diagram is divided into three levels: individual, family and societal .

The inner circle is known as the micro-level or individual environment. When comparing this level with Hmong individuals, there are various stress factors that directly affect an individual's well being and functioning. The middle circle is known as the meso-level or nurturing environment. According to Anderson and Carter, the nurturing environment is the basic sense of identity of an individual. It is the main support system for the individual such as their immediate family and the community around them. The outside circle is known as macro or the sustaining environment. This level is the instrumental needs of man, the goods and services, the political power and the economic resources. To compare this system with that of the Hmong society, it would be that of their clan structures, rituals and belief systems, conventional healings and their extended families.

Figure 1



Anderson and Carter (2003)

Components on the Individual Hmong Family System

The Hmong are known as large family with average family size of twelve or more children in the older generation and an average of six children in the Hmong-American family (Vang, 20045). The size of the family has a great impact on many aspects of the children's life such as their sense of identity, proper nutrition, adequate living space and medical or dental care. Having a larger family means that they are less likely to live in safe neighborhood due to higher cost of raising a large family. They ended up in the low-income neighborhoods or apartment complexes. According to (Vang) based on Census 2000, approximately 30% of Hmong families are living under the poverty level. Vang argued that children living in poverty lack a sense of privacy in overcrowded dwellings, vulnerable to abuse and mistreatment, neglected or malnourished and emotionally unstable. Similarly, they are more likely to live in a two to three bedroom apartment complex where children have to share rooms with other siblings and sometimes with parents or grandparents. They have no privacy or a quiet place to study and as they grow up, this can become an embarrassment for them. For some children, this could lead them to spending more time away from the home and becoming engage in deviant behavior such as gang involvement.

Hmong families that are struggling financially or living under the federal poverty level have a greater potential for their children to become involved in negative behaviors. Children with families receiving public assistance are more likely to engage in gang activities as the parents' main focus became that of keeping a roof over their heads and food on the table versus the success of their children. Parents are unable to provide

adequate school supplies, decent clothing for school or provide for the children's basic personal hygienes. Most Hmong student from low income family receives free or reduce lunches (Lee, 2005). These children are more likely to live in low income neighborhoods which can also have negative impact on the children's ability to achieve in the mainstream system.

The Nurturing System in Hmong Family

A nurturing environment involves the immediate and intermediate family system. Unlike the simple lifestyle in their native Laos where Hmong families farmed and raised domestic animals to provide both a livelihood and a source of family and personal fulfillment, life in the United States is very different. In their native country, Hmong families grow enough to feed their families and then the surplus are sold and traded to provide a collective income for the family as a whole (Lee, 1993). Parents were able to provide guidance and are the role model for their children. Children look up to their parents and see them as the ultimate decision maker. Therefore, the relationship between children and parents becomes one of mutual respect and the family dynamic is more stable and creates a more cohesive family members.

Hmong are also known as close ties nuclear family. They live in a community which everyone knows each others. They are inter-related to each other within a clan or by marriage. They support, care and share the good and bad things with each other (Douglas, 1993, p. 100-102). They used a system from a famous African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child" to help each other discipline children whenever they see a child did something wrong. Children are taught to be kind and respectful of their elders.

Parents want and encourage their children to live and model after well respected members of society.

Some Hmong families, especially older generation found life in the United States as difficult and complicated. They see the Hmong-American family as only looking after themselves and there is no support system for them to turn to for help. Most of the older generation came to the United States without any formal education. Therefore, they lack the skills or abilities to assist their children in their education or how to seek help when children engage in delinquent behaviors. Hmong parents rarely initiate contact with their children's school and only goes to the school when a teacher or administrator directly request for their presence (Lee, 2005). Many of the Hmong parents still hold on to their old custom and belief. However, children are adapting to the new custom and belief system of their adopted country and they want to fit in with the mainstream children. Often times, children need help and support from their parents who are unable to provide them. Children in turn, loose respect for their parents who they see as uneducated and old fashion. This can often timelead to family conflict.

Another major contributing factor in Hmong family conflict is the lack of communication. Problems are rarely openly discussed among the family members. Most of the time, the communication between family were in the form of directive from the father to the mother and down to the children so it create confusion and stress to the children. Therefore, the children might explore other alternatives to help relieve their stress such as joining gangs.

The Sustaining Systems in Hmong Family

The sustaining systems in Hmong family included clan structures, extended kinships, belief and ritual systems, as well as goods and services, political power, and economic resources. In applying this theory to the Hmong community, some Hmong families normally shun away from this system of support. Hmong people rarely seek out political offices or get involve with the larger community as a whole. Therefore, these families have very little to no knowledge on how to ask for help or support for their children when needed. In turn, government officials failed to recognize the need to address the Hmong youth issues as the Hmong people are not as vocal about issues that may concern their children. As is known, there is no local government agency, nonprofit organization, school or community agency in the Sacramento area that is geared toward focusing on Hmong youth delinquents. According to Zand, , Thomson, , Cervantes, , et al., (2009), the comprehensive child development relies on the supports, relationships, and activities available to children at home, at school, and in the community. Hmong children do not have any structural program or services to help them succeed in the mainstream. As a result, gang involvement becomes the most likely choice to fulfill their mainstream identity, self worth and a sense of family.

Significance of the Study

It is the researcher's hope that knowledge gained from this research project will be served as the most up to date information pertaining to Hmong youth gang and that programs and services can be identified for those children that might be seeking help to avoid being recruited to join street gangs.

Definitions of Terms

Listed below are the definitions of terms that have been defined in various ways in the literature. In order to understand the complex history of Hmong people in the United States and their transition into America's society, some basic terminologies needed to be defined.

Acculturation: Refers to the changes in cultural patterns when two different cultural groups have ongoing contact with one another. Although both groups might change as a result of the contact, the dominant group ordinarily produces more changes than the weaker group.

Clan: A group of families of who claim descent from the same mythological ancestor. There are approximately twenty different Hmong clans, with names like Cha, Cheng, Chue, Her, Lee, Lor, Vang, Xiong and Yang.

Culture: Culture are those sets of shared world views, meanings, and adaptive behaviors derived from simultaneous membership and participation in a variety of contexts, such as: language, rural, suburban or urban settings, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, nationality, education, and occupation, and political ideology.

Hmong: Hmong is a group of minority people who originated in China along the Yellow River. They now live all over the world. Hmong came to the United States as refugees from Laos (Yang, 1999).

Kwv: Refers to a younger brother or any person who is younger.

Kwvtij: Relatives within the father side

Neejtsa: – Groups of relative, which are related to the wife of other clan.

Refugee: In 1951, the United Nation Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defined refugee as an individual who has left his/her native country due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, and/or membership in particular social or political opinion.

Resettlement: The process that includes obtaining basic necessities such as food and shelter, learning a new language, understanding a different social, economic, and political system other from the individual's origin or country, and acquiring education and employment.

Royal Lao Army: The ruling authority in Laos from 1947 until the communist seizure of power in December 1975.

Southeast Asian Refugees: Refugees who come from the following countries: Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. The main groups were Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, Mien, and Laotian.

The Secret War: The military conflict between forces of the Royal Lao government, supported by the United States and the Communist Pathet Lao and Vietnamese forces backed by North Vietnam from 1962-1975.

Tij: Referring to an older brothers or any person who is older.

Txiv Hlob: An uncle who is older than his/her father.

Tasseng: A sub-district chief.

Txiv Ntxawm: An uncle who is younger than his/her father.

Vinai: A refugee camp open in Northern Thailand after the fall of Vietnam War specifically setup for Hmong People.

Yawg: Grandfather

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the reviews of the literature pertaining to the research topic. It is organized into the following themes: (1) a brief history about the Hmong people, (2) Definition on gang; (3) Historical background on gang; (4) Asian gangs; (5) Hmong Gang and (6) Hmong gang activities.

History of the Hmong People

The Hmong American is a group of people who, according to historical record, originated in Southwest China and then migrated to Southeast Asia and they are also known as Indochina. Originally, the Hmong are known as Miao or Meo in China (Yang, 1993; Quincy, 1988). Miao or Meo referred to as savage and barbarian (Howard, 1982) by the Chinese. In Lao and Thai, Meo is a derogatory term referred to as cat. However, the Hmong prefer to call themselves as Hmong. Hmong are primarily highland farmers who clear fields by cutting down all growth and then burning it off. The form of agricultural technique is known as “slash and burn.”

The origination of the Hmong people remains unknown. What is known for sure was that the Hmong begins to appear in Chinese history along several provinces in Southwest China. A controversial book by Quincy (1988), states that Hmong ancestors might have migrated south from Siberia to China and settled in northeast China, which placed them in Hunan Province near the bend of the Yellow River sometime before 3000 B.C. Yang (1995) confirmed that Hmong ancestors have lived in the plains along the

Yellow River in China for several centuries before the arrival of the Han people. Quincy and Yang state that about 400 – 900 A.D., the Hmong have their own kingdom. They lived and enjoyed considerable bargaining power with various functions. For examples, the Hmong practiced democratic politic which are similar to the republican party of this country. Their monarchy functioned very much like a federated state in which most of the real power devolved to local units. Villages organized into districts and every pp. 38). Quincy explains that the Hmong Kingdom last for nearly five hundred years, it reached the zenith of its power and prestige in the last half of the sixth century. During that time, there were several wars raise again the Hmong; however, the Hmong was able to win them all. It was not until 907 A.D., when the Chinese adventurer Ma Yin led a rebel army and annexed most of the Hmong territories. The Hmong King was killed as were as all his generals. Hmong lost their kingdom to the Chinese.

After losing their homeland to the Chinese, some Hmong migrated further south, reaching the land of French Indochina that includes Vietnam, Laos, Burma, and Thailand. As stated before, the Hmong American arrived from Laos. The so called Hmong Lao, arrived in Laos in the early 1800 century (Yang, 1993; Quincy, 1988). Similar to their living styles in China, the Hmong always settled on mountainous areas, away from other people to avoid conflict. After resettled to Laos, they live a peaceful life alongside their neighbors Thailand, Burma and Vietnam for more than a half century. Yang (1994) states that in 1896, the Hmong began to establish relationship with outsiders and moved toward modernize society. Due to this move, the French-Laos authorities appointed the first Hmong sub-district chief known as Tasseng that consist mainly of village chiefs.

Between 1940 - 1945, the Hmong were recruited to help the French against the Japanese occupation in Indochina. Since Hmong have no modern weapon and were no match for the Japanese, they served mostly as guides, interpreters and to hide French Officers from the Japanese (Quincy). Hmong were also assigned to assist the French Commando to escape after the fall of Dien Bien Phu and hide them from the Viet Minh (Quincy).

A decade later after the French had left Indochina because of their defeat in Vietnam; the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) began to recruit the Hmong as guerrilla forces to fight the Communist Vietcong beginning in 1961 under the leadership of Vang Pao. The main mission for the United States at the time was to use the Hmong to help stop the North Vietnamese aggression in Indochina as well as to protect the Ho Chi Minh trail that run along the Laos-Vietnam border. This trail was used by the North Vietnamese to supply military equipment and food to its forces who were fighting the South Vietnamese government and the United States (Hamilton-Merritt, 1993). They fought as “Special Forces” with American military backing against the North Vietnamese divisions that were invading the Plain of Jars and the northeastern province of the country, which adjoin North Vietnam (Bliatout, Downing, Lewis, et al., 1988). From 1961 to 1973, thousands of Hmong were involved in the “secret war.” It was estimated that during the war, Hmong casualties were about ten times higher than the American soldiers fighting in Vietnam (Rice, 2000).

In May 1975, immediately after the communist military victory in Cambodia and South Vietnam, the Pathet Lao (communist government in Laos) violated the “Treaty of Peace and National Reconciliation” and took power in Laos. Soon, Laos became a third

communist state in Southeast Asia. They began to arrest the non-communist leaders who still remained in the country and sent thousands of politicians, military and administrative officer, technicians and ordinary citizens to political re-education camps. Due to their close allied with the United States during the Vietnam conflict, the Hmong knew that their fate under the newly installed communist government would not be good; therefore, the Hmong began to leave their villages, individually or in family groups, to escape and across the border into Thailand (Bliatout et al.,). By 1988, more than 130, 000 Hmong have crossed the border into the refugee camp in Thailand (Quincy, 2000). Facing a great influx of people coming from all parts of Laos, the Thai government forced to open refugee camps scattered along the Thai and Lao border. Ban Vinai was one of the major concentration camp housing 90% of the Hmong population. It extended over 400 acres land and sheltered about 45,000 Hmong refugees (Bliatout et al.,).

In January, 1976, the first 150 Hmong families with about 750 people arrived in the United States under the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 (Bliatout et al.,). Since then the U.S. government granted thousands of the Hmong refugee into United States because of their military involvement with the U.S during the Vietnam War. According to Bliatout and colleagues, between 1975 to 1986, more than 60, 000 Hmong refugee settled in the United States in various part of the country. Pfeifer (2001) stated that based on the U.S. Census count, about 94,439 persons of Hmong origin were counted in the 50 U.S. states including the District of Columbia in 1990. Ten years later, 169, 428 were enumerated in 2000 which represent nearly a 90% increase in the census enumerations over the course of the decade. California being the largest Hmong

populations of 65,095 follows by Minnesota 41, 800 and Wisconsin 33, 791. Sacramento metropolitan areas have the third highest Hmong population with Minneapolis-St. Paul and Fresno as the largest.

Hmong Family Dynamic

Hmong have been known as close knit nuclear family. They live in a community which everyone knows each other. They are inter-related to each other within a clan or relationship with other clan by marriage. They refer to each other as relative (Kwv tij Neej tsa), and treat their community as if they would their own family. They support, care and share the good and bad thing with each other (Douglas, 1993). In the Hmong society, family refers to the whole clan and it is very important to protect their clan name. When a child is born, he or she automatically becomes a member of his/her father's clan. The child receives the father's clan name in addition to a given name, signaling membership (Weinstein-SHR, 1986).

Hmong family often includes members of many generations of relatives and members from other families whom are of the same clan. Keown-Bomar (2004) explained Hmong family (Tsev Neeg) as a wide group of relatives who rarely see each other. They are related through an original household. They are a group of related individuals that live together, work together to make a living, raise children, conduct social rituals, and take care of each other. It includes several generations of grandparents, married sons, their wives and their children. All the children call each other as brothers (Kwv Tij). Men who shared the same surname may use the kin tern kwvtij (brothers and cousins of the same clan) to refer to each other (Keown-Bomar, 2004). Anyone who is

older, by birth is referring to as “tij laug” and anyone younger is called “Kwv”. They teach their children to address clan members according to their age. Children are taught to be respectful to their elders and they are expected to use the proper name when addressing someone within the same clan such as txiv hlob, txiv ntawm, or yawg.

A family’s reputation is the focus in each clan and it drives their way of life. They are more concerned about losing face than anything else and would do anything to avoid bringing shame to the family. Children are expected to not only be respectful of elders, but to help with family tasks and avoid bringing shame to the family (Brown, Bakken, , Nguyen, et al., , 2007). Once a person is connected with something bad, it will permanently ruin the whole family name and parents will do anything to avoid it from happening to their family. Leadership or being a “good person” is also a goal for every parent. One a child is born; they prepared that child to be the future leader or a good person “Ib tus neeg zoo.” All family members are allowed to teach and discipline the child. Hmong children are taught to show kindness and respectful to another person and parents want their children to model someone with a good reputation.

Clan is a very important factor for Hmong society. It traces its origin to a common mythological ancestor (Weinstein-SHR, 1986). The Hmong paternal clan system is the most fundamental social organization to tie together social, political, economic and religious aspects of behavior, and serve as a primary focus for their daily lives (Howard, 1996; Xiong, 2002). The society is organized around patrilineal clans, with a profound respect for the elders and for ancestral ties (Xiong). The clan provided a sense of security and support needed by the members (Dao, 1982; Finck, 1982; Howard,

1996). Clan leaders serve as arbitrators in resolving intra-clan and inter-clan conflicts. They often resolve disputes between husbands and wives, parents and children, and clan members (Xiong). A clan leader must be very intelligent and able to show sympathy toward his members. He is usually the person who has the most knowledge and must be rich to enable to host or show hospitality of any outside visitors. He must be knowledgeable of Hmong traditional culture such as shamanism, wedding negotiator, and death ceremony performer and knows some custom law. The clan leader is recognized as the head of all families that belong to that clan (Xiong, 2002). He is a recognizable leader, which means no one appointed or elected him but everyone gave leadership to him. Usually, he would be a leader for life.

Hmong family also feels a strong responsibility to support their nuclear family members. When a family member needs help, all in the unit contribute generously in aid. This form of support is also open to trusted friends. The family works in a structure of authority and respect from ancestor ideology. In the Hmong household, men and elders had significantly more status and power than either women or children (Kaiser, 2004). The father is the authority figure of the family and makes all the important decisions. The mother is expected to take care of her husband, her in-laws and her children. The children are expected to obey and respect their parents without exception ((Brown, et al., 2007; Kaiser, 2004).

Hmong parents in the United States still hold on to their old custom and believe. However, children are adapting to the new custom and culture of their adopted country and more wary about fitting in with the mainstream kids than about adhering to their

native culture and believes system. They need help and support from parents who are unable to provide due to cultural gap. This can lead to family conflict or miscommunication with the Hmong family. In the Hmong home, problems are not openly discussed among the family members. Most of the time, the communication between family were in the form of directive from the father to the mother and down to the children so it create confusion and stress to the children. Therefore, some children would explore other alternatives to relieve their stress by joining gangs. Most of the time, they did not called and admitted themselves as gang members or gang organization. They are a group of relatives or friends in the neighborhood (Quincy, 1988).

Hmong Education

The children's education is the most important aspect for all Hmong parents regardless of class and background because in Laos only the rich and high ranking government or military official can afford to send their child or children to school (Yang, 1993). Hmong had lost many generations of their children to wars, discrimination, and isolation so they did not have a formal education until the early 1900; perhaps, Hmong might not have any formal education after they lose their kingdom to the Chinese in the 600 A.D. They were denied the right to go to school and educate themselves. So, they were illiterates in education and lacking in many areas (Quincy, 2000).

Even then, living in isolated mountainous ranges, education was next to impossible. It was not until World War II that some Hmong family who could afford to send their children to school. The first villages school was establish in Xiengkhouang Province in around 1939 (Weinstein-SHR, 1986; Bliatout et al., 1988; Quincy, 1988;

Yang, 1994). There were only a small number of Hmong who were fortunate enough to attend school because schools were located too far from their villages. Even then, they have to travel long distances by foot to get to school (Yang, 1999, p. 37).

After World War II, in response to the pressure from the Hmong leaders of Xiengkhouang plateau that mostly funded by their leader General Vang Pao, the schooling system started to extend to other Hmong-inhabited mountainous areas of Xiengkhouang Province (Bliatout et al.,). Unfortunately, the Vietnam War erupted. Hmong villages became battlegrounds, and thousands of families were forced to relocate (Howard, 1996). They have to send their children to fight the war, but the war had provided an opportunity for some to enroll in school as well. The war had opened their eyes. They take this opportunity to educate themselves about the world. Within a short period of time, a few Hmong were able to advance in high school level learning. One area that was very special to the Hmong was learned how to fly air plane. In fact, several Hmong young men were able to fly war plane to help with the secret war in Laos. Due to their parents or relatives' involvement in the war, many were able to advance themselves by moving to Vientiane, capital of Laos to pursue high school level education.

After the end of the Vietnam War, Hmong escaped to the refugee camp in Thailand where they begin to send more of their children to school. At the camp, educated Hmong students volunteer to teach Hmong, English and France to young children. Later, the Thai government and many voluntary organizations took over the Hmong education (Bliatout et al.,). During this period, it is the first time what parents could send both boys and girls to school because girls were no longer needed to help their

parent with household duties. Many Hmong children and young adults enrolled in school for Thai, French, Chinese and English. Some vocational programs were offered to teach them skills such as: typing, sewing, mechanics, blacksmith, or barbering (Howard, 1996, p. 33). It is also the first time, many of the Hmong adults have the opportunity to learn how to read and write in their own language.

Culture Conflict

Since the Hmong's resettlement in the United States, the nature and dynamics of parent-adolescent relationships have changed dramatically. Children growing up in the United States have become more acculturated, integrated, and oriented toward individualistic values compared to their parents. Parents and adolescents experience different rates of acculturation because adolescents adopt the language and behaviors of the mainstream culture more quickly than their parents who are still emphasizing values and standards from the country of origin (Xiong, Tuicomepee, & Retting, 2008).

Even today, some Hmong parents still hold on to their traditional practice of parenting where the father is the decision-maker. In the old tradition, Hmong parents were responsible for determining their children's acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. They trained their children to be interdependent. They expected their children to learn that they belong not only to a nuclear family but to an extended one and to a clan system as well (Xiong, 2002). As stated by Faderman (1998), children in Laos have a clear picture of family hierarchy and do not go beyond their elder whether its brothers, uncles or grandparents. To confirm this traditional cultural value and family hierarchy, Kaiser (2004) conducted a study in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, and

did confirm that many Hmong parents think that it is necessary to keep their children very close at home in order to protect them from bad influences that will lead to a bad reputation in the community. Their greatest fear is that their children will become a part of a gang.

One of the mysteries for the Hmong people in the United States is that lives are very different from Laos. Even the American society is rapidly changing as a continuous process. Parents do not know their children's world and the children do not know their parents' world (Yang, 1999). There are often conflicts between the values of independence in the American society they encounter in school and in their neighborhoods and the traditional values of interdependence in their own families (Hendrick, Downing & Deinard, 1986). Yang (1999) supported the statement made by Hendrick and colleagues by stating that since their parents were raised in a different world at a different period of time, they have different attitudes and values from their children who grew up in the new country. The parents have been reared in the old world culture; children have no respect for them and look upon them as "old fashioned" or "behind the times".

Due to the aforementioned issues, conflict in the Hmong family began when their children transition from elementary to junior high school. In elementary, children still maintained close ties to their parents and still look up to their parents as the decision-maker and their protector. However, once they enter junior and high school; they start to explore the world around them and begin to mix with other kids who may come from high risk neighborhoods or families. Hmong American adolescents, especially those

living in high risk areas, are at risk for delinquency and dropping out of school (Supple & Small, 2006). Xiong, Tuicomeppe and Retting (2008) stated that research found that adolescents ages 13-16 tend to experience more intense conflicts with their parents, compared to early and later adolescents. Xiong and colleagues indicate that a study of more than 100 Vietnamese families in the St. Louis area found that many of the parent-adolescents conflicts were related to the adolescents' problem behaviors such as truancy, delinquency, and affiliation with delinquent peers.

For Hmong children, balancing themselves between Asian and the American cultures are not easy tasks. They must first struggle to balance between the new and the old cultures and then incorporating this struggle with the American mainstream cultures. Therefore, many of Hmong children found themselves caught between two different worlds (Yang, 1999). Several years earlier, Carroll (1996) states similarly that Hmong children struggle to honor their heritage and traditions while taking advantage of rights to independence and choice in the United States. Consequently, they sought love and support from their so call friends "gangs" who understood and accepted them for who they were. Children feel like they cannot talk to their parents. They are more likely to talk to a peer when they have a problem. When confronting with issues such as misunderstanding, confusion, unclear expectations, and conflicting cultural values, many Hmong parents found their dreams in the United States shattered. The intra-relationship between parents and children begin to fall apart as their children began to involve in gang activities, dropout of school, run away from home or became delinquent criminals (Carroll, 1996). When the children failed to meet parents' expectations as possible

breadwinner for the family, they became depressed and feel hopeless for their children's future. As stated by Le (2007), many Asians feel overwhelmed, frustrated, depressed, and even angry as they try to adjust to living in the U.S. This can be especially common among Vietnamese, Amerasian Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian immigrants, who tend to have lower levels of socioeconomic attainment and therefore are at greater risk for experiencing difficulty in adjusting to American society.

Live in America

Many Hmong parents expressed regret that they had decided to come to America and brought their children to become criminals and died on the hand of their own criminal acts unlike many of their brothers' countrymen who died for a cost during the war. Thousands lives had lost, but those lost were not as heartbreaking as few of these in their new land because they did not die for any purpose. Hmong parents felt that the lives in America are not any better than in the mountainous areas of Laos. A well-known Sacramento Bee reporter, Steve Maganini (2005) writes that Hmong parents sacrifices to give their children a chance at a better life in America but instead they only to see them lost to a criminal culture unlike anything that existed in the mountains of Laos.

Youth gang violence has devastated the Hmong community. Many parents thought that they had escaped of guns and death from their war thorn country where gun and death is a daily life. They had flown a half way around the world to the new country, hoping that they would never lose their children to gun violent again, but it was false hope for many parents. Children youth gang has become a reality that encountered by Hmong family of all socioeconomic status. It does not discriminate against whether a

Hmong family is a doctor, lawyer, professor, teachers, business owner, or farmer. They are all in the same situation in this country because they live in the same neighborhood and the children go to the same school (this paragraph must be referenced).

Gang Definition

The Term “gang” mostly use by the law enforcement. It is defined in a variety of ways due to the fact that they come in a variety of forms. State and local law enforcement tend to develop their own definition that fit their local youth gang. Researcher and scholars also define gangs in different version.

The general term of gang is defined by Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary as “a group of persons associated together for unlawful or antisocial purposes”.

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1997), a youth gang is commonly thought of as a self-formed association of peers having the following characteristics: a gang name and recognizable symbols, identifiable leadership, a geographic territory, a regular meeting pattern, and collective action to carry out illegal activities (Howell, 1997).

Gang is a developmental stage in communities where socially acceptable alternatives are not available. Carroll (1996) views gang as symptom of community disconnection. It’s possible that this disconnection begin right in the home, between parents and their children.

An earlier definition given by Thrasher (1939) state that gang is an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. Thrasher characterized gang by the following type of behavior: meeting face-to-face, milling,

movement through space as a unit, conflict, and planning. The result of this collective behavior is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps, solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to a local territory.

Klien (1971) define gang as any denotable adolescent group of youngsters who (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighborhood, (b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name) and (c) have been involved in a sufficient number of delinquent incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents and/or enforcement agencies (p. 13).

Historical Background on Gang

Gangs are not a new phenomenon nor are the problems associated with them; however, they have never touch a greater segment of society as they do now. These criminal groups have been a part of world history for thousands of years and their roots run deep into America's past and current culture. Gang problem can be traced to the dawn of the country, when the Europeans migrated to the East coast. Due to poverty and disease, many parents died and orphan their children. These children became the problem in many cities (Lewis, 1996). Gang groups do not discriminate against age and racial background. An adult gang group that is well known in the United States is the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), also known as white gang that existed in 1865 and remains active today. In the early 19th century, gangs were primarily Irish, Jewish, and Italian (OJJDP, 1998). Lewis explains that in the early 1900s, Irish citizens were no longer considered second-class citizens and Italian and Jewish controlled gangs were in nearly every large

city. Italian controlled crime groups merged into one large organization known as the mafia. Following that, Black gangs began to emerge. They began to form social organizations between many of them. They focus on racial and anti-social by committing violent criminal activity among themselves and against other racial groups. They soon became the seedlings for some of the most notorious gangs the nation has ever known (Lewis, 1996). According to Lewis, by 1963 they were two street gangs started to take form that would eventually evolve into two of the most powerful street organizations in Chicago such as the Blackstone Rangers and the Black Disciples. These two groups controlled and operated many businesses such as restaurant, clothing boutiques, taste freeze, pool room, Teen Town Dance Studio and an art studio. To avoid being viewed negatively, they also offered many community-based programs that people in the community would benefit from. As a result, they became nationally recognized and gained support from prominent business men, entertainers, and politicians (Emery, 1996)

By 1970, another two well-known black gangs were emerged in the west coast, especially in the city of Los Angeles (LA), the Crips and the Blood (OJJDP report). Once the Crips and the Blood were formed, LA became the playground for the newest gangs. They continued to grow during the 1970s, and later formed in other cities throughout the United States. Due to their expansions and violent behaviors, the Bloods and the Crips are the most well-known gangs in the United State today. They are predominately African American and they have steadily increased in number since their beginnings in 1970. According to a recent national law enforcement survey (1999) ,

31% of gang members are black, 47% are Hispanic, 13% are white, and 7% are Asian and 2% others (OJJDP).

Southeast Asian Youth Gangs

The Southeast Asian gangs began in the late 1970s after thousands of Southeast Asian refugees started resettle to the United States. Once formed, the Vietnamese, Laotian, Hmong and Cambodian gangs represent the bulk of the Asian criminal street gang problems in California. According to Jones (1987), Vietnamese gangs started to form first, and then followed by Laotian, Hmong and Cambodian gangs into the 80s and mid-1990s. Vietnamese make up most of the gangs because they are the largest immigrant population (Jones). They are the most well-known and violence criminal street gang that threaten law enforcements all over North America and Australia.

According to Zelfden (1987), Vietnamese gangs are known to have three levels in some of the larger groups. The first level is the leader men who are in their 30s. They are known as “Dai Low,” or big brothers. The big brothers are the planner. The second levels are known as “Sai Low,” or little brothers. These levels are those who on their 20s. They are the one who carry out most of the criminal activities. The third levels are known as “Kit Jai.” This level is made up of high school and junior high school students. They carry most of the guns for the older gang members (Harris, 1987). Harris states that traditional street gangs are organized for financial gain, but for the Vietnamese gangs in conjunction with the Chinese gangs, they were organized to specialize in robbery, extortion, burglary, drug and prostitution with profits going to gambling and drug.

Unlike traditional ethnic street gangs, the Vietnamese do not fight for turf, nor do they appear to have the initiation rites, defined membership or colorful names as of Chinese gangs such as New York's United Bamboo or Ghost shadows, although some Vietnamese, particularly those of Chinese ancestry, work for Chinese gangs (Hornblower, 1987). They have been hard to identify and attack because members are transient and mobile. They move around a lot, do not claim turf or territory and do not use colors or uniforms to identify themselves. They do not like to be identified. If they learn that police know who they are, they move off (Coresletti, 1987). Vietnamese gangs are very violent and most often, they have firearms in their possession when they commit crimes, and they do not hesitate to use them (Rogers, 1986). They usually have advance information about their victims and where their value items (Coresletti & Lewie, 1987). They break into their victims' home, force them to the floor, tie them up and cover their so they will not recognize the robbers. They threaten their victims with a promise to return and kill the family if the robbery is reported to the police. They know their people better than any other culture (Hendricks, 1987).

Hmong Gang

Unlike the Vietnamese gangs, Hmong youth gangs are not so much into financial profit driven. They organized mainly for protection from others neighborhood youth groups. Although, they occasionally invade family, there were no known financial benefit criminal activities for the Hmong gangs. They did not conduct criminal activities as a group. From time to time, they committed financial criminal activities to support their activities but that was not their main goals and objective.

Hmong youth gang members are mostly those kids who have no family support and direction. Due to their lack of Western styles of community-based agencies, in their early resettlement to the United States, the Hmong didn't know how to setup and organize social services program that would benefit at risk children and their families. Many news agencies like the Sacramento Bee, Detroit Dateline, Philadelphia Free Press, and Star Tribute stated the culture clash has caused many Hmong children to seek freedom in gangs that's why they are not doing well in their life including education and behavioral norm, but there is not a programs in the Hmong community that teach the value of Hmong culture to these kids. Hypothetically, how could a plan grow up without the proper water, fertilizer and environment? Applied the same concept of this question to the Hmong youth, they are most likely grow up without the proper information about cultural values, beliefs system, and parental and societal expectations. Hmong children most likely grow up without proper guidance to school. There are no other curriculums after school such as structure sport, music, and tutoring. On the other hand, mainstream youth participated in structure program after school such as little league baseball, basketball, football, soccer, volleyball, music. Some of the Hmong youths have participated in program such as soccer but they were not structured programs. No one direct or coach them so they play without rules and discipline. Hmong children rarely get the support they need proper growth and development. Some are left alone and to grow and fend for themselves. Some will grow up and become successful members of society but others would need additional support from parents and community to become successful.

Mara (2005) states that Hmong gangs are loosely knit group of kids who banded together to protect themselves into a very violent street gang that engage in illegal activities or in a myriad of criminal acts, such as drive-by shootings, violent home invasion robberies. As stated above, in their early formation, Hmong gangs were not violence; however, overtime, they evolved into wide range of crimes, such as homicides, gang rapes, prostitution, home invasions, burglaries, auto thefts, and most recently, the sale and distribution of illicit drugs (Johnsen, 2005). These Hmong youth gangs do not have an adult leadership in the group or an adult who organize the group. These Hmong teenagers may start out as loose groupings of youngsters who hang out together, but later drift into criminal activities such as burglary, auto theft, robbery, and drive by shooting. Once recruited into the real gangs they begin their careers as professional criminals. They are mostly young kid within the ages of 15 to 21 years- old whose purpose is to fight each other. Unlike many of the tradition street gangs and organized criminal gangs, such as the Vietnamese gangs whose purposes are mostly for financial gain. They were organizing by some of the former Vietnamese soldier who fled from South Vietnam after the Vietnam War.

Hmong Gang Activities

Gang culture has been a sad fact of Hmong life in America since the early 1980s, when Hmong youth who grew up in the poorest neighborhoods formed gangs for protection against established Africa American and Latino gangs. Hmong gangs and the level of their criminal activity are increasingly severe. They involved in a wide range of

crimes, such as homicides, gang rapes, prostitution, home invasions, burglaries, auto thefts, and, most recently, the sale and distribution of illicit drugs (Straka, 2003).

According to Jewett (2005), there are various reasons Hmong children become gang. Jewett stated that there are three most common things that set Hmong gangsters apart from other gang bangers. First of all, Hmong gangs are unlike many Latino and African American youth gang members who came from a broken family, which often from a single parent home who are raised by mother or father or grandparents. Some of them do not even know their father or mother. On the other hand, most or all of Hmong gang members come from two parents home with successful siblings; many are capable, respectful students; Hmong youth gangs are mostly from a good home. "They generally come from intact homes with supportive and loving parents." (Jewett, 2005, P. B 3). What are their motivations for gang involvement? This is one of the objectives for this research Project that intended to response to the question.

As stated earlier, Hmong gangs are not as organized as any other ethnic gang groups (Straka, 2003). They are form independently of each other and are into different small groups such as: Masters of Destruction (MOD), Junior Criminal Crip (JCC), Hmong National Society (HNS), Original Hmong Pride (OHP), Ruthless Boy Gangster (RBG), Tiny Rascal Gang (TRG), Unstoppable Criminals (USC), Young Mafia Society (YMS), Above the Law (ATL), Little Leprechaun Krew(LLK) and so on...(Straka). They are locally known gangsters. This is a sharp contrast to African American gangs such as Blood and Crip and Latino gangs such as the Nortenos and Surenos (SUR). Both the African American and Latino gangs are known thorough the country as Blood and

Crip; Nortenos and Surenos. They might have subgroups in each area but they identify themselves as a particular group.

Social Services Intervention

The Sacramento region has the second largest Hmong population in the state of California, second only to that of Fresno County. As a result of the large Hmong population in the Sacramento area, two agencies were established by Hmong community leaders to provide services specifically geared toward assisting the Hmong Community. They are Sacramento Lao Family Community, Inc. and Hmong Women's Heritage Association, Inc.

Sacramento Laos Family Community, Inc. was established in early 1980's under the national organization of Laos Family Community. Its purpose is to empower the South East Asian refugee communities with the knowledge and skills in making positive changes in their transition to becoming self-sufficient in the United States. It is a non-profit organization where their main funding sources come from local, state and federal government as well as from private corporations. It provides services exclusively to the Southeast Asian Refugee adults in the 80's. However, in the 90's, the agency expanded their services to include Russian and Ukraine communities. It provides services such as English as second language classes, job trainings, interpreting assistance, transportation and cultural awareness. It also serves as a community center and provides human services for refugee/immigrant families in the Sacramento region. Additionally, it provides mediations for disputes between Hmong families to resolve problems such as:

marital, parents and children conflicts, education as well as community problems between different clans.

In 1990s, the Hmong communities have seen a dramatic increase in family problems between men and women such as spousal abuse and increased in the number of divorces within the Hmong communities. As a result, Hmong women came together and established the Hmong Women's Heritage Association (HWA) which started out as a support group but later became incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1994. The organization works closely with a broad range of private and public agencies such as county and federal agencies and community-based organizations. Its mission is empowering Hmong women and their families in the Sacramento region to lead healthy lives. It provides culturally sensitive programs and services that educate and support families as they thrive. It provides services under the five core program areas to meet the needs of Hmong communities such as Family Support, Education and Outreach, Health, Language Access, and Youth. In 2005, HWA began to provide services to youth in several school sites such as after school counseling, mentor, and youth leadership programs. This organization also focuses on women's health and family.

There are several programs in the Sacramento region that serve the youth population, but there is no one specific program that target the Hmong youth. Due to various reasons such as: language barriers, cultural differences and gang activities, Hmong youth are less likely to participate in programs that are not specific to their race. Racial discrimination also plays a factor in Hmong youth's unwillingness to reach for help or get involved in community services that are available to assist them. A study by

Lee (2000) about Hmong students in University High School in Wisconsin indicated that traditional Hmong student rarely had contact with White or African American students. They would like to get to know American student, but they appeared to be uninterested in initiating a friendship with any other students different from their race. She concluded that traditional students' attitudes toward White and African Americans demonstrate that newcomers quickly recognize the existence of the racial hierarchy (P 61). Hmong youth preferred to get involved with programs offered only through their ethnic community. However, there are a limited number of programs offered to youth in the Hmong community and gang involvement becomes the better choice for them to feel a sense of support and belonging.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

To reiterate, the purpose of this exploratory study is to examine whether or not there is any significant relationship between structural prevention programs and gang involvement.

This study combines insight with the literature and self-reports of the respondents from the interviews in an effort to identify issues that are relevant to design programs to effectively work with at risk youth in the Hmong community.

This chapter covers the methods employed in conducting this Master's Project. It includes a discussion on the description of study design, data collection instruments, and the plan for the data analysis, as well as the precautionary procedures utilized to protect and maintain confidentiality and privacy of the research participants.

Research Design

The exploratory, cross-sectional research design was utilized in this research study. Cross-sectional study is defined as the "research based on data collected at one point in time and such studies can nonetheless be used to investigate the development of some phenomenon over time (Monette, Sullivan & Dejong, 1998, p. 92 & 93).

Instrumentations

This study utilized survey type questionnaires. The questionnaires consist of both close-ended and open-ended questions with a totaling 40 questions. The questions were organized into two parts. Part I consisted of questions pertaining to personal data and

demographic information. Part II consisted of questions pertaining to risk factors, available resources, and existing barriers that prevented youth from utilizing these services. The questionnaires were developed by the researcher with the assistance from the research's Project advisor, Dr. Serge Lee.

Subjects

The subjects who participated in the research project consist of 50 Hmong youth ranges in age from 11 – 20 years old, living in the Sacramento area. The reason for selecting this age group is due to the potential risk of gang involvement in children in this age range. A snow ball sample method was used to recruit the participants. Snowball sampling refers to a networking method in which one person refers another person.

Data Gathering Procedures

In order to maintain consistency with the questioning of the participants, an interview guide was developed and utilized in the interviewing of the subjects. The method used to collect data in this study is through one-on-one interview with selected youth who are at risk of gang involved. The author attended Hmong social gatherings, Hmong functions, youth “hang-outs”, and schools in order to gather and recruit the subjects for this study. Participation of subjects was voluntary. The author asked each subject individually for his/her participations in the study by discussing with him/her the purpose of the study as well as the benefits for this study. Once a potential subject has agreed to participate in the research, he/she was asked to sign the consent form for their participation before administering the questionnaire. The interview utilized a semi-structured interview process. Majority of the participants are bi-lingual. Therefore, the

interviews were done both in Hmong and English depending on the comfort level of the respondent in answering the questions. Each interview took approximately 45 minutes to an hour to complete. The interview began on March 3, 2010 and the last interview ended on March 20, 2010.

Protection of Human Subjects

The protocol for the Protection of Human Subjects was submitted and approved by the Division of Social Work and pose minimal risk. There is no physical risk involved; however, there is the potential for psychological risk to the participants.

A consent form was given to each participant and verbally explained to each participant. The consent form ensured the participants that their answers would be kept confidential throughout the entire study and no identifiable information would be obtained. Participants will remain anonymous. Each participant was given an ID number for data analysis purposes. The completed project will not include any identifying information on participants. All the consent forms and data were secured in a locked cabinet. All of the data were destroyed upon completion of the project by one month after the researchers' project is filed by Graduate Studies.

Data Analysis

The subjects were giving a number from 1-50 for each survey. The researcher also prepared a code sheet to make sure the data collected match the subject being interviewed. For example, if the question has three answers, each answer were given a number: the number 1 to identify as Hmong speaking, number 2 for English and number 3 for both Hmong and English speaking. All the data entry was completed at the

California State University Sacramento computer lab. Data entry and analysis were completed using the computer program known as SPSS.

Limitations

It is important to consider the results of the present study in light of the limitations. The sample size was small and it might not give the accurate interpretation of Hmong youth Gang. Interviewees may have given answers that they thought the interviewer wants to hear. Therefore, some of the answers on this research project may not reflect the actual experiences and feelings of the respondents.

The Sacramento region is the focus and selected as the primary site of the geographically for this project because these area has the highest Hmong population in Northern California.

Furthermore, the respondents selected for this interview were Hmong teens in different clan and their ages range from 11 to 20 years old. The intent of this study is to select this age group because they may be at risk of getting involved in gang activities. They are also able to engage in conversation with relatively clear communication skills and be able to understand the purpose of this study.

The limitation in this project is that there are very limited literatures written specific about Hmong youth gang, therefore, making it difficult to justify and make comparison.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to understand the Hmong youth gang behavior in the Sacramento region and what services are available to address this problem now and in the

future. Qualitative research methods was used in this study to examine this social phenomenon-the high prevalence of Hmong youth gang from all fronts of the youth gang spectrum as compared to other ethnic groups. The intention of this research project was to gain a thorough and deeper awareness of the behavior and lifestyle of Hmong youth gang.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter contained the results from the research study which examined Hmong youth gang violence in the Sacramento region. This study focused on two aspects: to find out how the participants perceived the value of their family and cultures and to look at what kind of future they want for themselves.

The presentations of these findings are divided into four major sections: 1) demographic characteristics, 2) family involvement, 3) risk factor that contribute to youth gang and 4) other alternative activity involvements.

This study also looks at demographic variables which included: sex, age, birthplace, number of years living in the United States, language spoken at home and the number of siblings in the household. The second section included the participants' behaviors toward their family and their culture based on information provided in the questionnaires. The key variables in this section included: respect for individual decision making in the family, striving for better education, participation in recreational activities, goals and expectations, leadership roles, perception of family values, sense of belonging within the family, sibling relationships, cultural values, parent-child relationships. The third section included the respondents' answers to the questions pertaining to the risk factors that may have contributed to negative behaviors. The key variables in this area included: cutting classes or stealing due to peer pressure. The final section focused on

other alternative activities that youth could participate in or is aware of other than gang involvement.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Respondents' Age and Sex

This study included a total of 50 participants, all of whom are Hmong youth in the Sacramento region. The participants' ages range from 11 to 20 years old and the breakdown of their ages are as followed: 2% (n = 1) are 11 years old, 4% (n = 2) are 12 years old, 2% (n = 1) are 13 years old, 12% (n = 6) are 14 years old, 20% (n = 10) are 15 years old, 16% (n = 8) are 16 years old, 12% (n = 6) are 17 years old, 22% (n = 11) are 18 years old, 6% (n = 6) are 19 years old and 4% (n = 2) are 20 year old (Table 1). Out of the 50 participants, 20% (n = 10) are female and 80% (n = 40) are male (Table 2).

Table 1

Age of the participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 11	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
12	2	4.0	4.0	6.0
13	1	2.0	2.0	8.0
14	6	12.0	12.0	20.0
15	10	20.0	20.0	40.0
16	8	16.0	16.0	56.0
17	6	12.0	12.0	68.0
18	11	22.0	22.0	90.0
19	3	6.0	6.0	96.0
20	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 2

Gender of the participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	10	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Male	40	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 3

Number of years in school

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	1	2.0	2.3	2.3
	4	4	8.0	9.1	11.4
	7	2	4.0	4.5	15.9
	8	2	4.0	4.5	20.5
	9	8	16.0	18.2	38.6
	10	7	14.0	15.9	54.5
	11	7	14.0	15.9	70.5
	12	7	14.0	15.9	86.4
	13	5	10.0	11.4	97.7
	18	1	2.0	2.3	100.0
	Total	44	88.0	100.0	
Missing	System	6	12.0		
Total		50	100.0		

Table 3 displays the number of years in school. Among the participants, 2% (n = 1) completed 3rd grade, , 8% (n = 4) completed 4 years of school, 8% (n = 4) completed 7 years of school, 4% (n = 2) completed 8 years of school, 16% (n =8) completed 9 years of school, 14% (n =7) completed 10 years of school, 14% (n = 7) completed 11 years of

school, 14% (n = 7) completed 12 years of school, 10% (n = 5) completed 13 years of school, 2% (n = 1) completed 18 years of school, followed by 12% (n = 6) did not answer the question

Table 4

Language spoken

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Hmong	27	54.0	54.0	54.0
English	18	36.0	36.0	90.0
Hmong/English	5	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The participants' preferred language spoken at home are as followed: 54% (n = 27) speak Hmong only, 36% (n = 18) speak English only and 10% (n = 5) speak both Hmong and English (Table 4).

Table 5

Where were you born

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Laos	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Thailand	13	26.0	26.5	28.6
	USA	35	70.0	71.4	100.0
	Total	49	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		50	100.0		

Of the total respondents, most of the participants were born in the US (71.4%) while the remaining of the participants were born in Thailand (26.5%). Only one person did not report his/her country of birth (Table 5).

Table 6

Years living in United States

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 4	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
7	1	2.0	2.0	4.0
12	4	8.0	8.0	12.0
14	6	12.0	12.0	24.0
15	9	18.0	18.0	42.0
16	9	18.0	18.0	60.0
17	6	12.0	12.0	72.0
18	10	20.0	20.0	92.0
19	3	6.0	6.0	98.0
20	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	
Total	50	100.0		

Table 6 displays finding of number years that the participants lived in the United States. Among the respondents, 2% (n=1) indicated that they have been in the U.S. for 4 years, 2% (n=1) 7 years, 8% (n=4) 12 years, 12% (n=6) 14 years, 18% (n=9) 15 years, 18% (n=9) 16 years, 12% (n=6) 17 years, 20% (n=10) 18 years, 6% (n=3) 19 years, and 2% (n=1) lived for 20 years.

Table 7

Number of Sibling

Number of sibling		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	4.0	4.1	4.1
	2	1	2.0	2.0	6.1
	3	4	8.0	8.2	14.3
	4	5	10.0	10.2	24.5
	5	2	4.0	4.1	28.6
	6	2	4.0	4.1	32.7
	7	8	16.0	16.3	49.0
	8	7	14.0	14.3	63.3
	9	11	22.0	22.4	85.7
	10	3	6.0	6.1	91.8
	11	3	6.0	6.1	98.0
	15	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	49	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		50	100.0		

Table 7 displays the number of siblings in the participant's household as followed: 4% (n=2) has one sibling, 2% (n=1) two siblings, 8% (n=4) three siblings, 10%

(n=5) four siblings, 4% (n=2) five siblings, 4% (n=2) six siblings, 16% (n=8) seven siblings, 14% (n=7) eight siblings, 22% (n=11) nine siblings, 6% (n=3) ten siblings, 6% (n=3) eleven siblings and 2% (n=1) has fifteen siblings. Altogether, the mean sibling size per participant was 8.73 (standard deviation = 2.8 persons).

Table 8

Value individual's decision

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Rarely/None of the time	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
Once in a while	20	40.0	40.0	48.0
Often	17	34.0	34.0	82.0
All the time	9	18.0	18.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

When it comes to decision making, (8%) of the respondents indicated that they rarely/none of the time valued each other when making decision, (40%) consulted each other once in a while, (34%) said often and (18%) utilized it all the time (Table 8).

Table 9

Family striving for higher education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely/None of the time	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Once in a while	6	12.0	12.0	14.0
	Often	19	38.0	38.0	52.0
	All the time	24	48.0	48.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

To find out how Hmong youth feel about their families' attitude toward striving for better education, 2% (n=1) indicated that they are rarely/none of the time, 12% (n=6) once in a while, 38% (n=19) are often and 48% (n=24) all the time (Table 9).

Table 10

Family participate in recreational activities

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Rarely/None of the time	13	26.0	26.0	26.0
Once in a while	22	44.0	44.0	70.0
Often	10	20.0	20.0	90.0
All the time	5	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The participants were asked about their family participation in recreational activities, 26% (n=13) indicated that they are rarely/none of the time participated in recreational activities, 44% (n=22) once in a while, 20% (n=10) often and 10% (n=5) said all the time (Table 10).

Table 11

Parents discuss inappropriate behavior

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Rarely/None of the time	7	14.0	14.0	14.0
Once in a while	16	32.0	32.0	46.0
Often	17	34.0	34.0	80.0
All the time	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The respondent were asked whether or not their parents discuss inappropriate behaviors with them, the responses were 14% (n=7) indicated that they are rarely or none of the time discuss inappropriate behavior, 32% (n=16) once in a while, 34% (n=17) often and 20% (n=10) all the time (Table 11).

Table 12

Discuss goals and expectation in the family

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Rarely/None of the time	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
Once in a while	15	30.0	30.0	42.0
Often	17	34.0	34.0	76.0
All the time	12	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

To respondent were asked whether or not their parents set goals and expectations with the participant, the responses are as followed: 12% (n=6) indicated that they are rarely or none of the time discussed goals and expectations, 30% (n=15) once in a while, 34% (n=17) often and 24% (n=12) all the time (Table 12).

Table 13

Family share leadership roles

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Rarely/None of the time	8	16.0	16.0	16.0
Once in a while	14	28.0	28.0	44.0
Often	25	50.0	50.0	94.0
All the time	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Of the total fifty respondents, 16% (n=8) indicated they are rarely or none of the time share leadership roles among their family members, 28% (n=14) share once in a while, 50% (n=25) often and 6% (n=3) all the time (Table 13).

Table 14

Family as good as others

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Rarely/None of the time	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
Once in a while	9	18.0	18.0	22.0
Often	15	30.0	30.0	52.0
All the time	24	48.0	48.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

When inquired about the participants opinion about his/her family and whether they see their family just as good as other families: 4% (n=2) said that they are rarely or none of the time think that their family is as good as other families, 18% (n=9) once in a while, 30% (n=15) often and 48% (n=24) said all the time (Table 14).

Table 15

Feeling that I do not belong

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely/None of the time	32	64.0	65.3	65.3
	Once in a while	15	30.0	30.6	95.9
	Often	1	2.0	2.0	98.0
	All the time	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	49	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		50	100.0		

This table show the findings of how often the respondent feels that he/she does not belong in the family: 64% (n=32) indicated that they are rarely or none of the time feel that they do not belong to their family, 30% (n=15) once in a while, 2% (n=1) often, 2% (n=1) all the time and 2% (n=1) did not answer the question (table 15).

Table 16

Feel that parents love other siblings more

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely/None of the time	25	50.0	53.2	53.2
	Once in a while	15	30.0	31.9	85.1
	Often	1	2.0	2.1	87.2
	All the time	6	12.0	12.8	100.0
	Total	47	94.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	6.0		
Total		50	100.0		

Half of the respondents in this study said that rarely or none of the time feels that their parents love their sibling more than the respondent, 50% (n=25), 30% (n=15) once in a while, 2% (n=1) often, 12% (n=6) all the time and 6% (n=3) did not answer this question (Table 16).

Table 17

My family is important to me

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely/None of the time	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Once in a while	5	10.0	10.0	12.0
	Often	4	8.0	8.0	20.0
	All the time	40	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Family is still very important to the majority of the children with 80% (n=40) of the participants stated that families are important to them at all the time, 10% (n=5) once in a while, 8% (n=4) often while only 2% (n=1) feel that their families rarely or none of the time important to them (Table 17).

Table 18

Family consult with me

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Rarely/None of the time	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
Once in a while	22	44.0	44.0	56.0
Often	14	28.0	28.0	84.0
All the time	8	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

When it comes to decision-making within the Hmong family, 12% (n=6) of the total participants indicated that their families rarely or none of the time consulted with them, 44% (n=22) said once in a while, 28% (n=14) often and 16% (n=8) all the time (Table 18).

Table 19

Consult with other relatives

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely/None of the time	10	20.0	20.4	20.4
	Once in a while	18	36.0	36.7	57.1
	Often	17	34.0	34.7	91.8
	All the time	4	8.0	8.2	100.0
	Total	49	98.0	100.0	
Missing System		1	2.0		
Total		50	100.0		

When asked whether or not their parents consulted with relative regarding important decision making, 20% (n=10) indicated that their parents are rarely or none of the time consulted with their Hmong relatives and friends, 36% (n=18) once in a while, 34% (n=17) often, 8% (n=4) all the time and 2% (n=1) did not answer this question (Table 19).

Table 20

Traditional values are still strong in the family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely/None of the time	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Once in a while	8	16.0	16.0	20.0
	Often	16	32.0	32.0	52.0
	All the time	24	48.0	48.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Whether or not Hmong's traditional cultural values and beliefs system still remained strong in their families: 4% (n=2) stated that they are rarely or none of the time remained strong, 16% (n=8) once in a while, 32% (n=16) often and 48% (n=24) all the time (Table 20).

Table 21

Have done things parents disapproved

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Rarely/None of the time	5	10.0	10.0	10.0
Once in a while	33	66.0	66.0	76.0
Often	11	22.0	22.0	98.0
All the time	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Parents often viewed children's behavior as inappropriate and tend to disapprove that behavior; however, when this question was directed at the children, 66% (n=33) of the respondents stated that they have done things their parents disapproved of once in a while, 22% (n=11) often, 10% (n=5) rarely or none of the time, and only 2% (n=1) stated that they do it all the time (Table 21).

Table 22

Involves in Hmong community activities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely/None of the time	12	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Once in a while	17	34.0	34.0	58.0
	Often	12	24.0	24.0	82.0
	All the time	9	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 22 displays finding of whether or not the participants get involved with Hmong community events: 24% (n=12) indicated that they are rarely or none of the time get involved, 34% (n=17) once in a while, 24% (n=12) often and 18% (n=9) all the time.

RISK FACTORS

Table 23

Involved in illegal activities

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	20	40.0	40.0	40.0
No	24	48.0	48.0	88.0
Don't Remember	6	12.0	12.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This table displays the finding of whether or not the participants get involved in illegal activities such as skipping school or stealing: 40% (n=20) indicated Yes, 48% (n=24) No and 12% (n=6) did not answer this question (Table 23).

Table 24

Missing school because of peers influence

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	8	16.0	16.0	16.0
No	37	74.0	74.0	90.0
Don't Remember	5	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

There are many reasons why children would skip school. However, one main reason has to do with peer pressure from their friends. Table 24 displays the findings whether or not the participants have missed school because of peer influences: 18% (n=8) indicated Yes, 74% (n=37) No and 10% (n=5) don't remember (Table 24).

Table 25

Engaging in activities that they know is wrong

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	14	28.0	28.0	28.0
No	29	58.0	58.0	86.0
Don't Remember	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The majority of the participants, 58% refused to engage in activities that they know it to be wrong when asked to do so by their peers. However, 28% they did it anyway and 14% (n=7) do not remember (Table 25).

Table 26

Have friends who use drugs and alcohol

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	22	44.0	44.0	44.0
No	20	40.0	40.0	84.0
Don't Remember	8	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Drugs and alcohol have had a great impact on the lives of many youths in our society. This study tries to understand the factors that attributed to youths' involvement with drugs and alcohol. Table 26 displays finding whether or not the participants have friends that use drugs or alcohol: 44% (n=22) indicated that they have friends who use drugs or alcohol while 40% (n=20) said they do not and 16% (n=8) said they do not remember.

Table 27

Encouraged to use drugs or alcohol by friends

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	22.0	25.0	25.0
	No	31	62.0	70.5	95.5
	Don't Remember	2	4.0	4.5	100.0
	Total	44	88.0	100.0	
Missing	System	6	12.0		
Total		50	100.0		

To better understand the behavior of the youth, the participants were asked whether or not they have ever been encouraged to use drugs or drink alcohol by friends. The majority of the participant said “No”, 62% (n=31) while 22% (n=11) said “Yes”, 4% (n=2) do not remember and 12% (n=6) chose not to answer this question (Table 27).

Table 28

Friends have negative influence on behavior

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	20	40.0	40.0	40.0
No	23	46.0	46.0	86.0
Don't Remember	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Peer influence can be good or bad depending on what kind of friends the youth hangs out with during their teenage years. Table 28 displays the finding whether or not the participants have friends that negatively influence their behavior: 40% (n=20) indicated that they have friends that encourages negative behaviors 46% (n=23) No and 14% (n=7) said they do not remember.

Table 29

Location of residence contributes to gang involvement

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very Unlikely	17	34.0	34.0	34.0
Unlikely	26	52.0	52.0	86.0
Very likely	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Many literatures indicated that the environment such as the location of residence can contribute to gang involvement. Table 29 displays the finding whether or not the residence have any impact toward gang involvement: 34% (n=17) respondents indicated that they are very unlikely to involved in gang activities, 52% (n=26) unlikely and only 14% (n=7) indicated that they are very likely to involved in gang activities due to the environment which they live in.

Table 30

I make my own decision

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	33	66.0	66.0	66.0
No	17	34.0	34.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

When it comes to decision making in the family, the majority of the participants indicated that they make their own decision in their families (66%) while(34%) depend on other family members to make the decisions for them (Table 30).

Table 31

Father makes the decision

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	25	50.0	50.0	50.0
No	25	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This item specifically designed to investigate whether or not the father still makes the decision for the family. Table 31 shows that in today's Hmong family, the father is no longer the only decision maker with only 50% of the respondents indicated that their father is the one who makes all the important decisions in the family and the other 50% said the father do not make all the important decisions in the family.

Table 32

Mother makes the decision

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	19	38.0	38.0	38.0
No	31	62.0	62.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

When asked whether or not the mother is the decision maker for the family, 38% of the respondents indicated that their mother makes all the important decisions for the family while 62% indicated that their mother is not the primary decision making in their household (Table 32).

Table 33

Another sibling makes the decision

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	12	24.0	24.0	24.0
No	38	76.0	76.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

When asked if another sibling in their household makes important decisions in their families: 27% (n=24) answered YES and 76% (n=36) answered NO (Table 33).

Table 34

Joint decision

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
No	47	94.0	94.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 34 displays whether or not decision making within the Hmong family is a joint effort. The findings indicates that this rarely is the case with only (6%) indicated that everyone in the family took part in making important decisions in their family while the majority of the respondents said that is not true (94%).

Table 35

Hmong culture value and believes

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid I know nothing at all	5	10.0	10.0	10.0
I somewhat know it	23	46.0	46.0	56.0
I know it	15	30.0	30.0	86.0
I know it greatly	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This question was designed to investigate whether or not Hmong youth still have knowledge of their traditional cultural values and believes. Out of the total fifty respondents, only 10% of the respondents said they know nothing at all while 46% (n=23) indicated that they somewhat know, 30% (n=15) know it and 14% (n=7) know it greatly (Table 35).

Table 36

Appreciate Hmong culture

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid I do not appreciate it at all	5	10.0	10.0	10.0
I somewhat appreciate it	4	8.0	8.0	18.0
I appreciate it	23	46.0	46.0	64.0
I appreciate it greatly	18	36.0	36.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 36 indicates that Hmong youth still believe that their culture values are still important to them. Most of the participants indicated that they somewhat appreciate their Hmong cultures (46%), 36% appreciate it greatly, and 8% somewhat appreciate it while only 10% indicated that they do not appreciate it at all.

Table 37

Factors contribute to youth joining gangs

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid The Hmong culture	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
The American culture	5	10.0	10.0	18.0
The economy	6	12.0	12.0	30.0
Gang groups	17	34.0	34.0	64.0
All of the above	18	36.0	36.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

When asked which of the followings caused Hmong youth to join street gangs: 8% (n=4) said it is due to the Hmong culture, 10% (n=5) believed that it is the American culture, 12% (n=6) said it is the economy, 34% (n=17) said gang groups and 36% (n=18) said all of the above (Table 37).

Table 38

Currently active gang member

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	24	48.0	51.1	51.1
	1	2	4.0	4.3	55.4
	2	4	8.0	8.5	63.9
	3	3	6.0	6.4	70.3
	5	1	2.0	2.1	72.4
	7	1	2.0	2.1	74.5
	A lot	12	24.0	25.5	100.0
	Total	47	94.0	100	
Missing	System	3	6.0		
Total		50	100.0		

When the participants were asked how many people do they know that is currently active in gang membership: 48% (n=24) indicated they do not know of anyone, 4% (n=2) know one person, 8% (n=4) know two people, 6% (n=3) know three people, 2% (n=1) know five people, 2% (n=1) know seven people and 24% (n=12) know a lot, which in this study, refers to eight or more people (Table 38).

Table 39

Interest in joining gangs in the future

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unlikely	40	80.0	80.0	80.0
	Somewhat	7	14.0	14.0	94.0
	Likely	1	2.0	2.0	96.0
	Very likely	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

All of the participants were asked what is the likelihood that they will join a gang group in the future, 80% (n=40) said very unlikely, 14% (n=7) somewhat likely, 2% (n=1) likely and 4% (n=2) very likely (Table 39).

Table 40

Help education about gangs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unlikely	14	28.0	28.6	28.6
	Somewhat likely	22	44.0	44.9	73.5
	Likely	9	18.0	18.4	91.8
	Very likely	4	8.0	8.2	100.0
	Total	49	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		50	100.0		

Participants were asked how willing were they to help promote education about the negative impact of gang involvement can have on a person with 28% (n=14) answered very unlikely, 44% (n=22) somewhat likely, 18% (n=9) likely, 8% (n=4) very likely and 2% (n=1) chose not to answer this question (Table 40).

Table 41

Youth program in the community

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes, I do	19	38.0	38.0	38.0
	No, I don't	31	62.0	62.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This item specifically designed to investigate whether or not Hmong youth are aware of youth programs that can help them to resist gang involvements in their community: 38% (n=19) of the participants stated that they know some youth programs in the community while 62% (n=31) of the participants said they do not know (Table 41).

Table 42

Participation in 4-H

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	50	100.0	100.0	100.0

A following item was constructed to investigate whether Hmong youth participated in 4 H programs. All of the respondents 100% (n=50) said they have not been involved in any 4 H programs (Table 42).

Table 43

Participation in Boys and Girls Scout

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
No	46	92.0	92.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Of the total participants, 92% stated that they never participated in the Boys and Girls Scout while only 8% said they did (Table 43).

Table 44

Participation in Boys and Girls Club

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	8	16.0	16.0	16.0
No	42	84.0	84.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

A similar item was constructed to investigate whether Hmong youth get involved in youth programs such as the Boys and Girls Club organization. Table 44 shows that only 16% of the respondents have participated in Boys and Girls Club while 84% did not.

Table 45

Participation in Little League

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid No	50	100.0	100.0	100.0

Another question was constructed to investigate whether Hmong youth have any knowledge and participated in Little League softballs and baseballs. All the participants, 100% of the respondents indicated that they have never been involved in Little League (Table 45).

Table 46

Participation in Youth Soccer

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
No	48	96.0	96.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Another question was constructed to investigate whether Hmong youth join youth soccer league. Similarly to their responses with other youth programs, 96% of the participants never join youth soccer league while only 4% said they did (Table 46).

Table 47

Participation in YMCA

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
No	48	96.0	96.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Of all the participants, there were only 4% of the participants states that they involved in YMCA programs and 96% indicated that they did not (Table 47).

Table 48

Participation in Big Brother

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
No	48	96.0	96.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The participants were then asked whether or not they have participated in the Big Brother program. Only 4% stated that they participated in Big Brother program while 96% stated that they did not (Table 48).

Table 49

Joined gang for protection

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	30	60.0	60.0	60.0
No	20	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

To find out whether or not the reason for joining gangs were for the purpose of protection, 60% of the participants said that is true in that they became gang members for the purpose of their own protection and 40% said that is not (Table 49).

Table 50

Joined gang for support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	19	38.0	38.0	38.0
	No	31	62.0	62.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The respondents were then asked if another reason they joined gangs were for the purpose of feeling like they have someone who would support them: 38% (n=19) stated that is true while 62% (n=31) stated that is not true (Table 50).

Table 51

Joined gang for recognition

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	23	46.0	46.0	46.0
	No	27	54.0	54.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The respondents were further questioned if they also joined gangs to feel a sense of recognition, 46% (n=23) said Yes and 54% (n=27) answered no (Table 51).

Table 52

Joined gang for financial support

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	13	26.0	26.0	26.0
No	37	74.0	74.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The respondents were then asked does joining gangs benefit them financially with 26% (n=13) of the respondents said that is true but 74% (n=37) said that joining gangs do not give them financial support (Table 52).

Table 53

Joined gang for a sense of belonging

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	31	62.0	62.0	62.0
No	19	38.0	38.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Another question was asked to investigate whether Hmong youth believe that joining gangs give them a sense of belonging: Sixty-two (62%) of the respondents believe that is true and (38%) believed that joining gangs does not give them a sense of belonging (Table 53).

Summary

The information obtained from the participants through the survey questionnaire provided valuable information to the researcher to better understand why Hmong youth engaged in gang violence in the Sacramento Region. The survey indicates that various factors could influence Hmong youth to become engaged in gang activities but some of the most noticeable factors that directly correlate Hmong youth and gang activities are social, family and community relationships.

This study involved 50 respondents and consisted of two parts: demographic and risk factors. The average age of the respondents is 16 years old. 20% of the respondents are females and 80% are males. Out of the total respondents, 54% speak only Hmong at

home, 36% speak Hmong and English at home while 10% speaks English only. Out of the 50 people interviewed, 70% were U.S born and 30% were born either in Thailand or Laos. The average siblings of the respondents were 6.75. The majority of the respondents considered family as important and are striving for a better education. Of the total respondents, 74% rejected peer influences as one of the reason for cutting class and 62% responded that they have not been pressure to use drugs by their peers. The majority of the respondents do not participate in any after school activities while 12% indicated that they are involved in the drill team, ROTC, Hmong club and 7 periods but 62% of the respondents stated that they do not know of any youth program in the community.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Hmong have an old saying: “Tu tub tu kiv los npaj laus, ua qoob ua loos los npaj tshiab” which is translated as raising children to prepare for a time when one is old and farm to prepare for a time when one is hunger. This is a concept that Hmong elders pass down from one generation to another in hopes that children will continue to carry on the Hmong traditional cultural values and belief system. However, once the Hmong people begin arriving in the United States, their once cherished traditional customs and cultures are view by children born and raised in the United States as “old fashioned” and have no value in their children’s lives here in the United States. Additionally, because the majority of Hmong parents lack the skills and education to better prepare them for a culture that is complex and unfamiliar, they are also less likely to be effective parents to their children in this country. The majority of Hmong parents continue to practice their traditional heritage of close family ties and maintain traditional values. However, their children seek independence and individuality which parents are unable or unwilling to compromise and could eventually lead to conflict within the family unit.

The main purpose of this research project was to explore the reason behind Hmong youth gang involvement in the Sacramento region and to identify intervention strategies to effectively curb gang activities among Hmong youth. This project also takes into consideration a thorough review from literature which concluded that Hmong cultural conflict is a main contributing factor towards youth’s gang involvement. For the

most part, findings from this study support the assertion but there is a lot more to the cultural conflict than the literature suggested. Most of the literatures reviewed make the assumption that Hmong youths suffered from culture conflict due to cultural demands, obedience and dedication to the family. However, the result of this study indicates that cultural conflict has little impact on the reasons Hmong youth become engage in gang activities. Rather, it is the lack of proper adult guidance, community support and accessible resources to assist the youth when they needed help that has a greater impact whether or not the youth will become engage in gang activities. The study further revealed that when Hmong at-risk youth do not get adequate support from their families, communities or schools, they turn to gang activities for support and to feel a sense of belonging.

Discussion of findings

Many literatures stated that some Hmong youth chose to reject the values of their parents' traditional culture by embracing the mainstream American culture. This study revealed that this is true to some degree in that a small percent of youth do feel this way. However, this study also found that 48% believed in traditional Hmong values within their family, 80% responded that their families are important to them while 36% expressed appreciation for their culture. Only 10% has no appreciation for their culture, 34% of the participants stated that they are often value each other when it comes to decision making in their family, 48% were strivings for a better education at all the time and 40% said that their parents consulted them regarding families matters. On the other hand, 66% of the participants indicated that once in a while they have done thing that

parents disapproved off while 2% engaged in unacceptable behaviors all the time. 24% stated that they often get involved in events held by the Hmong community.

This study also found that a small percent of youth engaged in negative behaviors: 16% of the participants stated that they skip school because of peer pressure and 74% responded no to peer pressure in relation to skipping school. When asked if their peers ask them to do things that they know is wrong but they did it anyway, 28% responded yes but 58% responded no. When asked if they have ever been encouraged to use drugs or alcohol by their friends, 22% responded yes while 62% responded no.

When asked if they feel the environment such as the location of their family's resident encouraged them to become gang member, not by choice but by opportunity; 34% responded that it was very unlikely, 52% responded unlikely while only 14% indicated that they are very likely to be involved with gang activities due to the location of their neighborhood.

Community resource is one of the main focuses for this study. Of the many major youth programs in the United States, this study found that only 38% of the participants knew or have information about youth programs in the community 62% do not. It further found that 100% of the participants have never been involved with the 4-H youth program, 8% are involved in Boys and Girls Scout, 16% with Boys and Girls Club, 0% are involved with Little League, 4% with Youth Soccer League, 4% with YMCA, and 4% with Big Brothers and Big Sister.

Recommendation and Suggestion of the Study

Youth gang problem is a widespread concern for every community across the country. To work toward reducing the youth gang problems, it is recommended that community leaders, elected officials and community agencies set aside funding and develop community programs and resources to address the core issues such as employment, youth recreation, and after school programs. This study revealed a pattern that when youth lack the necessary community support, guidance and positive activities, consequently, they feel unimportant, worthless, rejected and isolated from their families and the general population.

To help Hmong youth from becoming involved in gang activities, it is very important to understand Hmong culture. The traditional Hmong youth are less likely to get involve with program that is not gear specifically toward their race and therefore, is outside of their comfort zone. For example, programs and services should be centrally located in their neighborhood where it is easily accessible. Staff for the programs should be of the same ethnic group so they can be role models as well as have an understanding of the youth's cultural backgrounds. Youth also prefer programs that they can depend on to be there for long term support and is committed to provide assistance and guidance as needed. One such example could be an after school program. The program must be able to provide multiple services such as tutoring, skill trainings, anger management, conflict resolutions, self-esteem building as well as opportunities for youth to gather for socialization and recreational activities in a safe and healthy environment.

Programs and services could also be developed within the school system to reduce the conflict between different ethnic groups because most gang problems have a tendency to stem from conflict within the different ethnic groups. School should develop cultural sensitivity training to all staff and students and be proactive in passing the message to students about the importance of respect for cultural differences.

It is vitally important for Hmong parents and community leaders to promote positive image of Hmong youth. Currently, Hmong parents and community leaders do not have any program to support and promote positive image for Hmong youth and such program is desperately needed. For example, social events, Hmong media or radio station time could be set aside for the recognition of high achievements for Hmong students such as in education, sports or talent.

Community leaders, social services agencies, and law enforcement need to come together and work collaboratively to address concerns related to Asian gangs as well as any other ethnic gang in the community. Gang impacts everyone economically and socially. Resources are needed to bring together to develop effective prevention programs that will work to reduce incidents of youth gang problems in our community. We must also become aware of the increasingly violent realities that penetrate the lives of youth, families, and communities across the country and take a more proactive approach toward combating the youth gang problems.

APPENDIX A

Consent Forms

YOUTH CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

To prospective Hmong adolescent,

You are being asked to participate in a research project conducted by Pao Xiong, a graduate social work student at California State University, Sacramento. This study will explore the relationship between contemporary Hmong family structures and reasons Hmong youth become gang.

If you agreed to serve as a research participant in this research project, you will be asked to complete a set of questions pertaining to your views about youth gangs. One of the main purpose for this research project is to gain additional insight into factors that attributed to Hmong youth gangs participations and their destructions to Hmong cultural norms. In quick summary, your participation will involve the followings:

- Your responses on the questionnaires will be anonymous.
- You will not receive any compensation for participating in this study.
- You have the right to refuse to answer any or all of the questions.
- You have the right to withdraw from participating in the research project at any time.
- Only aggregate information shared by you and other participants will be used in the research report. No individual information of any sort will be reported.
- Information shared by you will be safe keep in a lock file cabinet. Once the information is entered into a computer program, the hard copy will be destroyed.

If you have any questions about this research, after your participation, you may contact me at (916) 812-7678 or by e-mail at px43@saclink.csus.edu. You can also contact my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Serge Lee at (916) 278-5820 or email him to leesc@csus.edu. For human services assistance, you can contact Lao Family Community, Inc. at (916) 331-0323

In summary, I truly appreciate your participation in this research project. Information shared by you will be invaluable to my research project and will be beneficial to the Hmong community. Your signature below indicates that you have been explained to and read and agreed to participate in this research study.

Signature of Participant

Date

PARENTAL CONSENT IN RESEARCH

To prospective Hmong parents/caretakers,

Your son/daughter is being asked to participate in a research project by Pao Xiong, a graduate social work student at California State University, Sacramento. This study will explore the relationship between contemporary Hmong family structures and reasons Hmong youth become gang.

If you agreed to allow your son/daughter to participate as a research participant in this research project, you are assured of the following:

- Your son/daughter's responses on the questionnaires will be anonymous.
- Neither you nor your son/daughter will receive any compensation for participating in this study.
- Your son/daughter has the right to refuse to answer any or all of the questions.
- Your son/daughter has the right to withdraw from participating in the research project at anytime.
- Only aggregate information shared by your son/daughter and other participants will be used in the research report. No individual information of any sort will be reported.
- Information shared by your son/daughter will be safe keep in a lock file cabinet. Once the information is entered into a computer program, the hard copy will be destroyed.

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact me at (916) 812-7678 or by e-mail at px43@saclink.csus.edu. You can also contact my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Serge Lee at (916) 278-5820 or email him to leesc@csus.edu. For human services assistance, you can contact Lao Family Community, Inc. at (916) 331-0323

In summary, I truly appreciate for letting your son/daughter to participate in this research project. Information shared by your son/daughter will be invaluable to my research project and will be beneficial to the Hmong community. Your signature below indicates that you have been explained to and read and agreed to let your son/daughter participate in this research study.

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX B
Research Questionnaires

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Personal Information:

1. How old are you? _____/Years
2. What is your gender? _____ Female _____ Male
3. How many years of schooling have you completed? _____/Years
4. What is the primary language you preferred to use? _____
5. Where were you born? _____
6. If you were born outside the US, how long have you been living in the US?
_____/Years
7. Including yourself, how many brothers/sisters do you have? _____

Please use the following responses to answer questions number 8 to 22

- 1 Rarely or None of the time
 - 2 Once in a while
 - 3 Often
 - 4 All the time
8. Our family value each other when it comes to decision making

 9. Our family strive for better education _____
 10. Members in our family participate in recreational activities

 11. Members in our family often discuss inappropriate behavior

 12. Members in our family often discuss goals and expectations together

13. Members in our family share leadership roles _____
14. I think that my family is as good as other families _____
15. I often feel that I do not belong to this family _____
16. I feel that my parent love my siblings more than me _____
17. I feel that my family is important to me _____
18. When it come to decision-making, my family consulted me for advice

19. My parents consulted their Hmong relatives and friends when it come to
disciplining me and my siblings _____
20. The Hmong's traditional cultural values and traditions remain strong in my
family _____
21. I had done things that my parents/caretakers disapproved

22. I had involved with event that is hold by Hmong in the community

Risk Factors:

1. Had you ever been involved anything deemed illegal such as skipping school or stealing?
_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't remember
2. Had you ever missed school several days because of peers influenced?
_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't remember

3. Had you ever been asked by your peers to do things that you know it was wrong but you still do it anyway?
- _____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't remember
4. Do you have friends that use drugs or alcohol?
- _____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't know
5. If yes, had they ever encouraged you to use drugs or drink alcohol with them?
- _____ Yes _____ No _____ Refuse to answer
6. Do you have friends that you believe they do not have positive influenced on you?
- _____ Yes _____ No _____ Refuse to answer
7. When it comes to gang participation, what do you think about the environment such as the location of your family's residency that may cause you to become a gang member not by choice but by chance? Would you say....
- _____ Very unlikely
- _____ Unlikely
- _____ Very likely
8. Which of the following person do you believe is the decision-maker for your family? Check all that apply. Would you say...
- _____ I make my own decision
- _____ My father
- _____ My mother
- _____ Another sibling
- _____ Joint effort
- _____ Others
9. How much do you know about the Hmong's traditional cultural values? Would you say...
- _____ I know nothing at all

- _____ I somewhat know it
 _____ I know it
 _____ I know it greatly

10. How much do you appreciate the Hmong culture? Would you say...

- _____ I do not appreciate it at all
 _____ I somewhat appreciate it
 _____ I appreciate it
 _____ I appreciate it greatly

11. Which of the followings do you believe cause Hmong youth to joint street gangs?

Please check only once.

- _____ The Hmong culture
 _____ The American culture
 _____ The economy
 _____ Gang groups
 _____ All of the above

12. Overall, how many people do you know that currently active members with a gang group? _____

13. If you are not currently joining a gang group, what is the likelihood that you may someday joining it?

- _____ Very unlikely
 _____ Somewhat likely
 _____ Likely
 _____ Very likely

14. Overall, how likely that you will help educate society about bad things that done by gangs?

- _____ Very unlikely
 _____ Somewhat likely
 _____ Likely
 _____ Very likely

15. What do you normally do after school? _____

16. Do you know any youth program in your community?

- _____ Yes I do _____ No, I don't

17. Had you ever participated in these programs? Check all that apply..

- 4 H
- Boys & Girls Scout
- Boys & Girls Club
- Little league
- Youth Soccer
- YMCA
- Big Brother
- Others _____

18. What do you think is/are the major reasons kids joint street gangs? Check all that apply

- Protection
- Support
- Recognition
- Financial Support
- To belong to

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